

March 26, 1950.

Dr. Alexander Hollaender,
Biology Division,
Oak Ridge National Laboratory,
P.O. Box P, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Dear Dr. Hollaender:

Before replying to your letters of the 22d and 23d, I would first like to thank you and the members of your group for the wonderful hospitality shown me on my recent visit. It was a most interesting and informative visit.

I was somewhat surprised to receive your invitation to contribute a chapter on UV effects on bacteria to the forthcoming volume on radiation biology, as this is a field which I have entered only very recently and obliquely, and know very little about. However, partly for the educational benefit (to me) that the task would entail, I will be glad to undertake the task provided that I can have the collaboration of Dr. Aaron Novick. I spoke to Novick about it, informally, on the phone and I think that I can persuade him to join with me if the arrangement meets with your approval. The deadline date, November 1, is rather soon, especially as both Novick and I will be away from our headquarters this summer, but it will probably allow enough time for at least a draft manuscript. If Dr. Novick's collaboration is satisfactory, may I suggest that you send him a formal invitation, and a duplicate set of instructions.

The chapter headings are somewhat confusing, as they seem to reflect an organization along intersecting cleavage planes. That is, you have technique, genetic effects, lethal effects, photoreactivation as separate chapters, as well as one on bacteria which cuts right across the other classifications, and is pretty well exhausted by them. Before the actual writing job is undertaken, I would appreciate some clarification as to the scope and area of the chapter you want on bacteria, so that there is no unnecessary duplication. Alternatively, I would raise the question whether distinct chapters on fungi, bacteria, and viruses are desirable, or whether they might not better be incorporated into the other subject headings.

Concerning the possibility of my joining the regular staff of the Biology Division, my views are along the lines of our earlier discussion. I would not object to the most stringent security regulations on work of an inherently secret nature, but I am afraid that I am sensitive enough to this type of atmosphere that I would feel somewhat stifled by its unmeaningful application to basic biological research, by the mere accident of the location of the Division Laboratory at Oak Ridge. I am not unmindful of the many advantages, both to my personal advancement and to doing a large volume of basic research under otherwise excellent conditions, that I should be losing by not taking up your offer. However, I have not been able to persuade myself that I would be a happier person or, in the long run, a more productive scientist by leaving my present connections with the University of Wisconsin, however meagre, by comparison, the personal ~~benefits~~ and the provision of research materials may be. These considerations would not apply to a short-term association with the laboratory, should the direction of my work indicate the advisability of seeking it. I hope that my hesitation at accepting a permanent appointment at Oak Ridge will not prejudice your consideration at some later date of a request on my part to make use of the Laboratory's facilities for a period of a few weeks or months.

You mentioned that you had not visited Madison for many years. I would be very pleased if you could find the time, during your trip to Chicago that you mentioned in your letter, to visit our laboratory.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Assistant Professor of Genetics